NIP-256

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

K. ANAZAWA et al

Serial No.

Filed: February 21, 2002

For: RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCE DECONTAMINATION METHOD AND APPARATUS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner of Patents
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

IN THE CLAIMS

Rewrite claims 4, 7, 8 and 12-14 as follows.

4. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising an oxidizing decontamination tank for said decontaminating metal member using oxidizing decontamination agent; said radioactive substance decontamination apparatus further characterized in that said carrier immerses said metal member in said oxidizing decontamination tank while carrying said metal member from the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the highest out of said reducing decontamination tanks, to the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the second highest out of said reducing decontamination tank.

7. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising multiple oxidizing decontamination tanks for decontaminating said metal member using oxidizing decontamination agent;

said radioactive substance decontamination apparatus further characterized in that said carrier immerses said metal member in said oxidizing decontamination tank in the process of carrying said metal member from the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the highest, to the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the lowest while immersing said metal member in the descending order of said radiation control value.

8. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to Claim 1 further characterized in that;

said carrier is designed carry multiple said metal members, and, when carrying said metal members one by one, it immerses the second metal member in the tank other than the one where the first metal member is immersed.

12. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination method according to Claim 9 further characterized in that:

a metal member is immersed in the next reducing decontamination tank subsequent to immersion in said oxidizing decontamination tank, while transferring among reducing decontamination tanks having different radiation control values.

13. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination method according to Claim 9 further characterized in that:

while a metal member contaminated by radioactive substance is transferred to different reducing decontamination tanks, oxidizing decontamination tank or washing tank, liquid deposited on said metal member is removed by any one of a shower, air blower, wiping means and mechanical polishing means.

14. (Amended) An radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to Claim 4 further characterized in that: at least one of a protective barrier, protective cover and gutter is provided between said reducing decontamination tanks and/or between and said reducing decontamination tank and said oxidizing decontamination tank.

REMARKS

Examination is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION OF REWRITTEN CLAIMS

4. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [through 3] further comprising an oxidizing decontamination tank for said decontaminating metal member using oxidizing decontamination agent; said radioactive substance decontamination apparatus further characterized in that said carrier immerses said metal member in said oxidizing decontamination tank while carrying said metal member from the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the highest out of said reducing decontamination tanks, to the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the second highest out of said reducing decontamination tank.

7. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [through 3] further comprising multiple oxidizing decontamination tanks for decontaminating said metal member using oxidizing decontamination agent;

said radioactive substance decontamination apparatus further characterized in that said carrier immerses said metal member in said oxidizing decontamination tank in the process of carrying said metal member from the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the

highest, to the reducing decontamination tank where said radiation control value is the lowest while immersing said metal member in the descending order of said radiation control value.

8. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [through 7] further characterized in that;

said carrier is designed carry multiple said metal members, and, when carrying said metal members one by one, it immerses the second metal member in the tank other than the one where the first metal member is immersed.

12. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination method according to [any one of] Claim[s] 9 [through 11] further characterized in that:

a metal member is immersed in the next reducing decontamination tank subsequent to immersion in said oxidizing decontamination tank, while transferring among reducing decontamination tanks having different radiation control values.

13. (Amended) A radioactive substance decontamination method according to [any one of] Claim[s] 9 [through 12] further characterized in that:

while a metal member contaminated by radioactive substance is transferred to different reducing decontamination tanks, oxidizing decontamination tank or washing tank, liquid deposited on said metal member is removed by any one of a shower, air blower, wiping means and mechanical polishing means.

14. (Amended) An radioactive substance decontamination apparatus according to [any one of] Claim[s] 4 [through 6] further characterized in that:

at least one of a protective barrier, protective cover and gutter is provided between said reducing decontamination tanks and/or between and said reducing decontamination tank and said oxidizing decontamination tank.